

## COVID 19 RESPONSE SUB-COMMITTEE - 5 OCTOBER 2020

### POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 2 NOVEMBER 2020

#### PART I – NOT DELEGATED

## 6. SERVICE RESTORATION – FACE TO FACE PUBLIC INTERACTIONS (CED)

### 1 Summary

- 1.1 Prior to Covid-19, TRDC along with many local authorities, had a requirement for site visits and home visits by staff as part of their day to day duties. However, with Covid-19 and the Government guidelines surrounding social distancing and home working, this had an impact on operational requirements, specifically home/site visits, which were cancelled and no new visits permitted.
- 1.2 TRDC are planning to restore some external face to face meetings, site visits and appointments at Three Rivers House. It is important to have an agreed corporate stance and policy on site visits, and especially the provision of PPE where necessary and requirements at Three Rivers House to enable appointments and face to face meetings with the public.
- 1.3 This report covers what was proposed before recent Government announcements on working from home following a rise in national coronavirus cases, seeks approval for **external face to face meetings and limited CAB meetings with clients only at this time** but also approval for both external visits which require home entry and internal to TR House when that becomes possible. It is envisaged we will review this at the end of October.

### 2 Details

- 2.1 At the Covid 19 Response sub-committee on 3 September, it was agreed that priority service areas, 1, 2 and 3 should be restored. Subsequently it was agreed that a face to face public interaction report be brought to the sub-committee outlining requirements and decision taken where these interactions would be taking place as a result of restoring priorities 1, 2 and 3.
- 2.2 Risk assessments have been completed, to enable the expansion of site visits, by all of the services which have functions involving site visits and face to face interactions both internally and externally. However, following government guidance and increasing Covid cases the recommencement of the majority of internal interactions at Three Rivers House and external home visits are currently postponed until further notice. A summary of the risk assessments and further actions required can be found at Appendix 1 for internal face to face public interactions and Appendix 2 for external face to face public interactions.
- 2.3 Of the risk assessments the vast majority of services have indicated they would like to have the site visit functions restored but at this stage, in light of evolving Government guidance, this would be limited to site visits externally (ie where there is no need to enter a premises). To do so, Officers may request PPE equipment should they wish to use it, guidance, and some training. None of the risk assessments have identified high risks associated with the restoration of the service. Restoration of anti-social behaviour low risk visits will not yet be undertaken as it often involve entering homes and the police are currently undertaking these where necessary. This is the same for some housing visits, licensing visits to premises and may also affect some

planning and planning enforcement visits where access to gardens may not be possible without access through the house.

- 2.4 Human Resources have prepared a PPE Policy, having taken advice from our health and safety advisers at Hertfordshire County Council. The policy recommends that Officers should try to meet customers outside where possible. If doing so, no PPE is required, unless this is desired by the officer or customer. The 2m social distancing rule should be maintained at all times and in all circumstances. An assessment of the site visit should be taken by the officers involved prior to the visit. Further details are provided in the PPE Policy, found at Appendix 3.
- 2.5 There are a number of services that, in order to restore priority 1 services and maintain performance, need to restore some face to face interaction with the public at Three Rivers House. There are two key areas being proposed for restoration:
- A limited number of interviews under caution in relation to Fraud, Environmental Protection and Regulatory Services.
  - A limited number of appointments in relation to processing new benefit claims.
- 2.6 There is also a potential requirement for licensing badges/plates to now be collected from the Council offices (priority 4 service). Whilst driver renewals and vehicle licences are still being issued and documents provided no badges or plates have been issued for a 6 month period. As the length of time increases there is concern there is an increased public safety risk of taxi drivers and vehicles not displaying the appropriate information confirming their licenced status. At the minimum the backlog should be issued (15 badges/180 plates). A risk assessment and procedure are currently being devised.
- 2.7 Arrangements have been designed to minimise the risk to staff and customers and ensure that Three Rivers House remains Covid secure.
- 2.8 There will be some physical changes to the reception area, such as a dedicated room for interviews under caution and the main front doors will remain locked at all times, with staff admitting customers for their appointments.
- 2.9 No appointments will be arranged outside of Three Rivers House current opening times, i.e. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am to 4pm. This includes CAB.
- 2.10 Appointments will be organised to ensure that members of the public turning up for appointments do not come into contact with each other. Initially these will be:
- 5 appointments per day (Mon, Weds, Fri) will be made available to Revs and Bens. These will be on the hour from 9am to 1pm.
  - 2 appointments per day (Mon, Weds, Fri) for interviews under caution and issues of cautions. These will be on the hour at 2pm and 3pm.
  - CAB will be asked to make appointments only on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at twenty minutes past the hour from 9:20 to 12:20
- 2.11 These plans are currently on hold following government guidance and as Covid cases are significantly rising nationally. However, some exceptions with the CAB may be made where necessary to support the most vulnerable people during a time when it's most needed.

### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 A number of services have not been able to conduct their service to the level prior to Covid 19. This has meant some of them have not been able to complete enforcement actions, others such as housing applications, have not been able to gather the evidence required to progress an application.
- 3.2 Following the agreement of restoring priority 1, 2 and 3 areas, risk assessments and processes have been put in place to allow for face to face visits and appointments to take place which will restore the service as agreed.
- 3.3 The risk assessments show this can be done safely, provided Officers make use of the PPE when necessary and follow the health and safety guidelines.
- 3.4 In circumstances of internal appointments at Three Rivers House and external home visits these will be delayed until further notice and we will continue where possible with virtual transactions. In exceptional circumstances, with agreed protocols in place it may be agreed on an individual basis with the Directors and Chief Executive.

### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. (describe impact)
- 4.2 **Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

None specific. Contained with the report, the risk assessments and the PPE Policy

### **5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

### **6 Legal Implications**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

### **7 Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 7.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

### **8 Staffing Implications**

- 8.1 Not applicable.

### **9 Environmental Implications**

9.1 Not applicable.

## 10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 Not applicable.

## 11 Public Health implications

11.1 None specific.

## 12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 None arising.

## 13 Communications and Website Implications

13.1 The website and communications will take place accordingly in line with when services are restored.

## 14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Corporate Framework. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

<b>Nature of Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Description of the risk	What happens if the risk was to occur	List control measures that are, or could be put in place	How will the risk be dealt with *	Enter the residual risk score
Services are not fully or partially restored.	Three Rivers residents do not receive full or partial services following the Covid-19 pandemic.	Priorities agreed and service restoration takes place as soon as possible.	Risk Assessments and Government guidance will be followed and services restored.	4

14.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

<b>Very Likely</b> ----- <b>Likelihood</b> ----- ▼ <b>Remote</b>	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b> 1	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Low</b> 4
<b>Impact</b> Low -----► <b>Unacceptable</b>				

**Impact Score**

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

**Likelihood Score**

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

## 15 Recommendation

15.1 That:

Members confirm and endorse the report and the appendices whereby **external face to face meetings recommence where they have been paused immediately, that limited meetings for the CAB with clients at TR House be permitted** and that external face to face meetings which require home entry and meetings at TR House involving staff and the public recommence once it is deemed safe to do so (this would not be before November).

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### Data Quality

Data checked by: Gordon Glenn, Performance and Projects Manager

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

### Background Papers

Service Restoration Priorities Report, Covid 19 Response Sub-Committee 3  
September 2020

### APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Service Restoration – Limited Face to Face Public Interaction at Three Rivers House

Appendix 2: Service Restoration – Face to Face Public Interaction, External to Three Rivers House

Appendix 3: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Guidance for Home Visits/Site Visits